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ENG 201 MW 3:30pm

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Electronic Dance Music and its Effect in Society

WE SHOULD DO SOME DRUGS AND THEN GO RAVE! From a form of expression, to a way to deal with life’s hardships, the power music can have on an individual is astronomical. Technology’s integration into every aspect of our lives is becoming more and more prevalent in todays culture, so it only makes sense that it has made its way into the music industry as well. With the increased use of electronic methods to make music, the Electronic Dance Music (EDM) Genre has gone from being an underground form of music, to one of the most popular and prevalent forms of musical expression today. Electronic Dance Music concerts, often referred to as shows or raves, are host to a variety of different people of various backgrounds, ethnicities, and social statuses. Similar to rock-n-roll when it first started to get popular, EDM has had many negative societal stigmas assigned to the genre.

The impact of how society views the music, the shows, and the attendees can drastically impact an individual’s views about the genre as a whole. Just like the idea that all Muslims are terrorists, the idea that all of those who enjoy EDM, and are a part of the rave culture, are all drug using ne'er-do-wells is a negative stigma that does nothing but increase the level of ignorance held by the people of our society. The negative notion behind EDM, and those that attend raves, pressures those who are on the fence about attending a show to not do so out of fear of it being a bad place to be, instead of encouraging them to try something new to gain new valuable life experiences. Yes, it is true that illicit drug use is prevalent at various EDM concerts, but various forms of illicit drug use are prevalent at any concert one might attend. Just like in any other artistic form of expression, EDM and raves allow all those who attend to escape from the harsh reality of the negativity of life while being surrounded by dozens of other people that share the same love for the genre and the culture. EDM is this generation’s version what rock-n-roll was to the previous generation.

**BACKGROUND AND SECONDARY RESEARCH**

**Background:**

Electronic Dance Music and raves have come a long way since their origination from European Techno in the early 1980s. Back then, “Raves were secretive, after-hours, private dance parties and were often held in gay clubs where attendance was restricted to invitees or friends of invitees. The site of the party was often kept confidential, and invitees usually were not told the location of the host club until the night of the party” (Information Bulletin 1). Being that they were underground parties, drug use at raves was very prevalent and still is at raves today. One of the more frequently used drugs, “MDMA…also known by the street name “ecstasy,” [is] used predominantly in dancing context.” Ecstasy releases a “rampant overflow of unconditional happiness… including feelings of euphoria, a heightened sense of well-being, and the intensification of sensory stimuli and perception” (Vitos 1-20) which makes it the go to drug for those ravers that want to use drugs to get an intense experience. According to Parrott, “Around 80–95% of dancers/ravers report using ecstasy/MDMA, compared to 5–15% of young people in general” (1). This means that of the 5-15% of young people that reported using ecstasy/MDMA, 80-95% of that was dancers/ravers. Drug use is a part of the rave culture.

**What the Drugs Do:**

Bontond Vitos PhD., specializes in cultural studies at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. As mentioned in his journal article, *The Dance Floor Experiment: Researching the Mediating Technologies and Embodied Experiences of Electronic Dance Music Events*, a participant in a focus group of ravers in December of 2012 was asked if the music needs drugs, the participant stated:

From the drugs and music interaction, I’d rather say…I can listen to music without drugs. But if I’m on drugs, I need music. The music helps the drugs, rather than the other way around, you know. If we were here, we were all high, I would be like: why aren’t they any fucking tunes going? [Others laugh.] So I think the question’s back to front, it’s not drugs helping the music, [its] drugs are better with music.

What this participant is saying is that the music is amazing, even when he is not under the influence, and that the drugs connect him to the music more that he already has. When asked if there is an organic connection between drug use and music, another participant in the focus group stated:

[drugs] take you away from the social norm, sometimes they make you more open, sometimes they make you more able to connect. Sometimes they make you less able to connect. In those moments where you’re less able to connect, there’s also music to connect with, which you can [all] collectively experience and have a good time. So you know, it provides you with a different social way to connect with each other.

One of the purposes of life is to connect with and have the biggest positive impact on the largest number of people as you can. This participant is saying that whenever a group of people is on drugs together and listening to music, even if they are at a loss for words, they can let the music speak for them. This provides another way to connect with people. After gaining a more mainstream following, EDM and raves have gone from an underground art form, to the widely popular type of concert today that they are today.

**The EDM Movement**

Not only has the rave scene grown in recent years, but EDM and the rave culture is starting to become “a site of significant youth cultural identity and, at times, something tantamount to a social movement or alternative lifestyle” (Anderson 499-519). While many people view EDM and raves as a detriment to society, “Raves had a distinctive ethos called ‘PLUR’, an acronym for peace, love, unity, and respect” (Anderson 499-519). Whereas some people might only focus on drug using habits of its member’s, the life style of tolerance and acceptance for all is what EDM and raves are all about. They are about bringing people of all kinds together to forget about their differences while they let the beat of a universal language move their bodies. The level of tolerance and acceptance of others is shown through the flag that says “Everybody Loves You Here” in the *Electric Forest 2014: The Journey Begins* video (See appendix 1).

**PRIMARY RESEARCH/METHODS**

Intrigued to find out what college students at Central Michigan University thought about EDM and ravers, I created a survey that I handed out to various students at the library during random hours of the day for a week straight. My survey consisted of various demographic questions, along with questions asking what the participant thought/felt about EDM, raves and ravers. The first question I will be discussing asked the participant “how many people, that are a part of the EDM/Rave culture, do you think use drugs?” The second question I will be discussing asked the participant if they they thought that those whom are a part of the EDM/Rave culture are the next generation of hippies or not.

**PRIMARY RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISSCUSSION OF ALL RESEARCH**

Much to my expectation, a large number of my participants responded with they believe all, most, or some rave kids do drugs (as seen in figure 1). What was very shocking to me, was that I did not get a single vote for none. Previously when I have conducted surveys, I have always had at least one vote for every answer.

Figure 1

Works Cited:

Anderson, T. L. and Kavanaugh, P. R. (2007), A ‘Rave’ Review: Conceptual Interests and Analytical Shifts in Research on Rave Culture. Sociology Compass, 1: 499–519. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.cmich.idm.oclc.org/doi/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00034.x/full

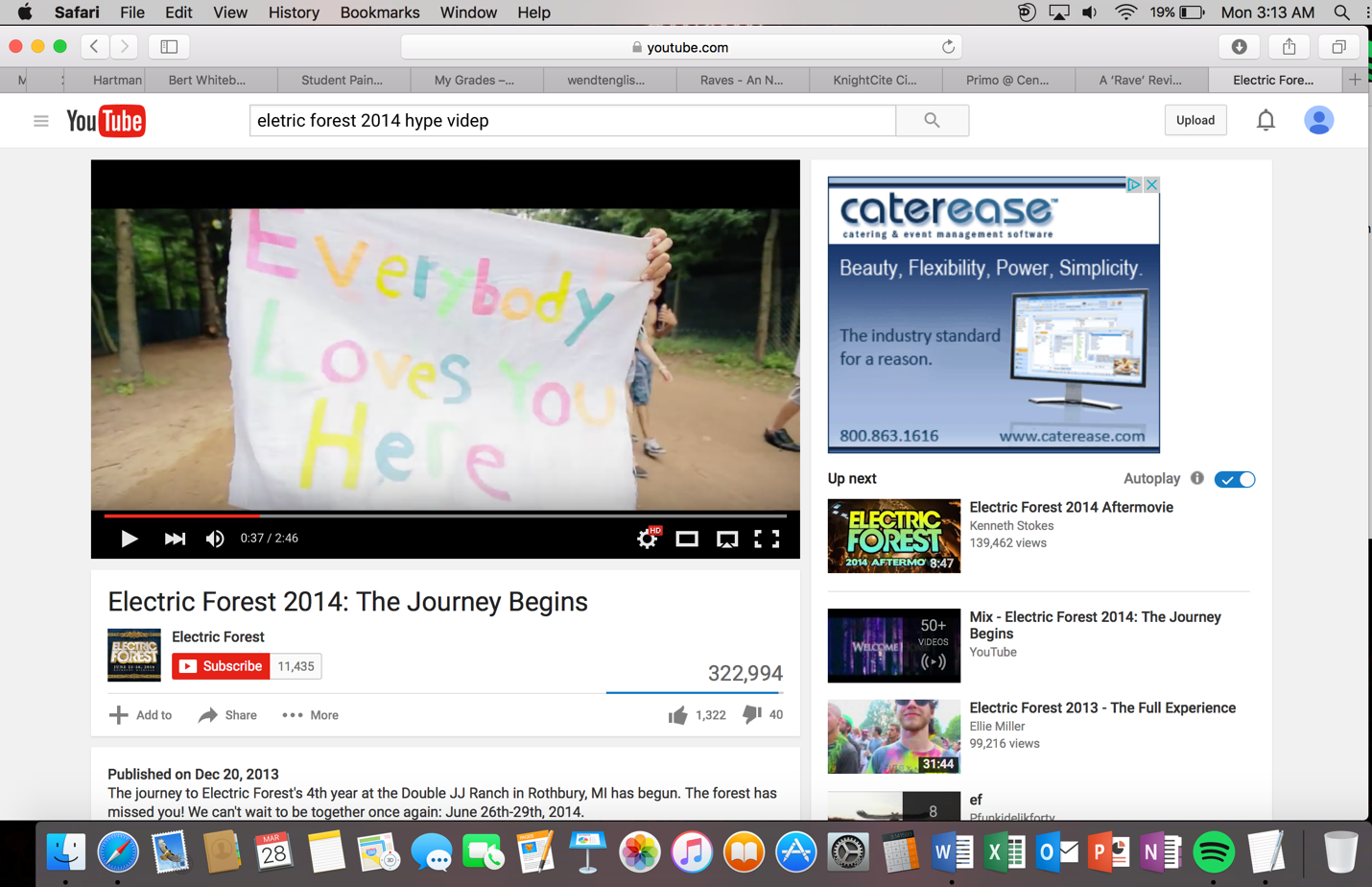
Parrott, A. C. "MDMA (3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine) or Ecstasy: The Neuropsychobiological Implications of Taking It at Dances and Raves." *Neuropsychobiology* 50.4 (2004): 1 par. *Central Michigan University Library* . Web. 28 Mar. 2016. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2015.1094903>.

"Information Bulletin." *Raves*. National Drug Intelligence Center, Apr. 2001. Web. 28 Mar. 2016. <https://www.justice.gov/archive/ndic/pubs/656/index.htm>.

TheElectricForest. "Electric Forest 2014: The Journey Begins." *YouTube*. YouTube, 20 Dec. 2013. Web. 28 Mar. 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYNXSPcMmMM>.

Vitos, Botond. "The Dance Floor Experiment: Researching the Mediating Technologies and Embodied Experiences of Electronic Dance Music Events." *Popular Music and Society* (2015): 1-20. *Central Michigan University Library* . Web. 28 Mar. 2016. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03007766.2015.1094903>.

Appendix 1



The beauty to music is that everyone that listens to it, is doing so for their own reasons.

Rock-n-roll helped spread peace, love and tolerance in the late 20th century and EDM is continuing to spread the message of love for your fellow man in the 21st century.

No Patrick, mayonnaise is not an instrument, but a computer can be.

EDM isn’t just a just a genre of music, it’s a movement toward a more tolerable and peaceful world.

FIRST HEADER: BACKGROUND AND SECONDARY RESEARCH

Synthesis of all of your readings. 6 sources

Stay neutral.

Tell readers what you found.

SECOND HEADER: PRIMARY RESEARCH, METHODS AND FINDINGS

Talk about what you did for your research

Explain what you wanted to find out

What you did to find that out

What you found

THIRD HEADER: DISSCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This is and ARGUMENT

THIS should be several pagers. 2 or 3 or more

Maybe your data dislay

Summarize everything

(leave white space-means hitting enter twice)

Concluding paragraph

Call to action

Leave reader with something to ponder

Works Cited

Appendices